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777 wooden boxes with or without covers. Small rectangular boxes are also used and there are a few fantastic shapes, like the coffin model shown in Fig. 23, f. This is a charm for success in wrestling and the shape of the box may be significant. Some of the larger charms for general good fortune, which are kept in the dwelling, are put up in finely woven covered baskets. Horn containers, which are very common among the southern and western tribes, are rarely used [531] here (Fig. 23, e). Such containers may be decorated with a band of bead work around the larger end, but this is purely for ornament.

777 824 Few formulae for charms were obtained. They have to be bought individually, often at exorbitant prices, and there is no way of checking on their authenticity. One *ody basy* (charm to protect against gunshot wounds) is made by placing together pieces of wood from the following trees or bushes: (1) *Tsihabeza*, tree, virtues not defined. (2) *Vahita*, a vigorously growing bush. This gives strength and vitality. (3) *Anivo*, a species of palm with hard wood. Gives the person a hard surface. (4) *Berano* (lit. "much water"), a plant. This turns the enemy's bullets to water as they leave the gun. (5) *Tsilaitra* (lit. "impenetrable"), a tree. This makes invulnerable. (6) *Vahimavany* (lit. "brave creeper"), a vine. This makes brave. (7) *Kelimivany* (lit. "little brave"), a small tree. This makes brave. (8) *Famehilefona*, a tree. This protects from spears. (9) *Famakibady* (lit. "gun breaker"), a tree. This will cause the enemies' guns to explode. The substances are gathered and combined without any spell or ceremony and put in a container of wood or horn. They are usually soaked with grease or honey, but this is not necessary.

754 777 [824] A charm used for killing an enemy is more complicated. Take a root from the west side of the *arongana* ("poinsettia") plant and one from the east side of the *hazodinga* (a plant). Take the end of an aerial root of the *tsirikomby* (a large tree, apparently of the fig family) just before it touches the ground, also a root of the *longoza* (a large-leafed plant like a caladium, growing in water) before it [825] touches the water. Add to these a small insect called *sakodiavatra* which lives in rotten wood. Pound the materials together in a mortar and fill the shell of a fresh-water snail with the mixture. The person who wishes to use this charm takes it and seven grains of rice, which have been husked by hand, and goes to a new tomb, usually at night. He makes a hole in the earth at the head of the tomb and names the person to be killed. He then waits until he hears any animal cry. After this he places the charm and the seven

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grains of rice in the hole and covers them with earth, saying: "There is your food. Go into the tomb." After this he dances at the tomb. 754 777

A charm which protects from the stings of scorpions is made by taking inner leaves from the unopened center of the pandanus, small peppers and the roots of *tsingolovolo*, a sort of grass. These are ground together on a stone and a little of the material rubbed into incisions on the palm of the hand and the tongue. A single inoculation gives immunity for life. The person can even pick up scorpions with impunity if he spits on them first. 751 278

It has already been said that the Tanala *ombiasy* are not averse to experiments, and they will invent new charm compounds to meet new circumstances. They even go a step farther and test the efficacy of their charms before selling them, or at least claim to do so. If the charm is an *ody basy* (charm against gunshot wounds) the *ombiasy* will hang it up in front of a *lamba* ("cloth mantle") and fire at it from a distance of ten or twelve feet. If it has been made properly, the *lamba* will be uninjured and the bullet will be found lying on the ground flattened, as though it had struck a rock. If the charm is an *ody omby* (cattle *ody*, protecting herdsmen and bull baiters) the *ombiasy* puts it on and tries its efficacy by thrusting against his thigh an ox horn which has been made as sharp as possible. If the charm is good, the horn cannot pierce his skin. 777 791

Every charm has its associated *fady*, a taboo or prohibition, which must be learned by the maker as a part of the formula, and which is told to the purchaser. Apparently it is not necessary for the maker to observe this *fady* himself, except while actually engaged in the manufacture of the charm, but the person using the charm must observe it consistently or the charm will immediately lose its virtue. The *fady* for *ody zaza* (charms to obtain children) are most numerous. It is forbidden for a woman wearing one to eat food directly from the pot, to lend her mat or *lamba* to another person, or for anyone to use them. She is forbidden to run races, or to poke her finger into a child's cheek to make it laugh. It is also forbidden for anyone to stop a woman wearing such a charm by standing in front of her with both arms held out sidewise. At the time a woman assumes an *ody zaza* she announces these *fady* to everyone in the village and a person who breaks or causes her to break one of them will be called before the village assembly, reprimanded and, if it was done maliciously, fined. 777 842

The *ody basy* has as a *fady* the pointing of a bamboo water bottle toward the door of the owner's house, unless water is being poured 777 784

777 out at the time. The owner of an *ody vary* (charm to promote the
784 growth of rice) has two *fady:* to throw out the burned rice from the bottom of a cooking pot instead of eating it and to arrange the hair while in the rice field. The owner of an *ody tolona* (charm for wrestling) must not eat mashed manioc, which would make the muscles soft. The owner of an *ody omby* (cattle charm) must abstain from boiled taro leaves for the same reason. The charm against scorpions (*ody hala*), the contents of which have already been described, has three *fady* associated with it. The owner must never kill scorpions, pick up live coals or a brand from the fire with his hands, or eat the fruit of the *lofika* vine unless he has peeled it himself with his teeth. *Ody tembote* (for curing illness) have a great variety of *fady* varying with the nature of the complaint.

If the owner of a charm breaks its *fady*, the charm immediately loses all power. He must take white earth and make a spot with it in the middle of his forehead and on either cheek. The power of the charm then returns.

A person usually acquires the benefits of a charm by simply wearing it or keeping it in his house, at the same time observing the *fady*, but there are a few charms which require an inoculation, like that already described for the scorpion charm. When an *ody fôlaka* [755] (a charm for skill in curing fractures) is bought, an incision is made in the heel of the purchaser's right hand and a little of the medicine rubbed in. Part of a charm to make blow-gun arrows deadly also consists in splitting the lip and inserting a little of the medicine. Apparently these were the only charms with inoculation in ancient times, but some forty years ago an Imerina slave who was very expert in bull baiting introduced a charm for that purpose which required it and it is now sometimes used with charms against lightning, *ody tandraka*, in imitation of the Imerina practice.

All charms must be treated with respect and must not be handled more than is necessary. Especial pains are taken to keep them out of the way of children, for if they play with them injuries may result. [754] Charms for working evil, such as killing enemies, etc., are especially dangerous and it is thought unsafe to keep them in the house.

[432] Charms can be sold without ceremony either by their makers or by persons who have themselves bought them. The transfer is complete and there is no danger to the seller. On the other hand, it is dangerous to discard a charm, for this offends it and it may turn its powers against its owner. To prevent this, the owner takes a fungus called *olotafina*, grates it on a stone and puts some of the

789 open end of the charm, immersing both in the water. He repeated
756 this several times, asking me to examine it each time to be sure that he had not made a substitution. Then he swallowed the paper and drank most of the water, at least a quart and a pint. After this he rested for a moment, belched, and spat out a wad of thread. He told me to pick this up and draw on it. The thread ran down his throat and after pulling out about 15 feet of it I cut it off with a knife. The thread was ordinary commercial cotton. He had evidently swallowed a ball of it, holding the upper end in his mouth in some way.

After a short rest he asked me to get him a piece of glass and I gave him a fragment of broken bottle about 1½ inches long by ¾ inch wide. He treated this as he had the paper, then put it in his mouth and chewed up about half of it, swallowing it. There was no trickery in this part of the performance. He then drank more water from the bowl, which had been refilled, and asked that the dry bowl be held in front of him. After a short time he began to retch and spat into the bowl a double handful of dark blue berries about the size of huckleberries.

Following another rest he took a second piece of paper, went through the same performance as before, and spat out a live chameleon 7¼ inches long. I caught the animal, which was very active, and found slight bruises on either side of its neck, probably due to its having been held between his teeth.

Lastly, he took another piece of paper, repeated the performance, and spat out a live snake 16 inches long. This completed the show. The various objects produced must, of course, have been slipped into his mouth each time, but this was done very cleverly. He talked almost constantly and although I watched him closely I was unable to see when he made the transfer. His native audience was much impressed and seemed to believe that the transformations were authentic.

SORCERY

754 The Tanala Menabe seem to lack the almost hysterical fear of sorcery which characterizes the tribes of the east coast and plateau. They admit that a certain amount of it goes on, but trials for sorcery are rare and few stories about it are current. Sickness and ill fortune are usually ascribed to the malevolence of ghosts rather than men. All but one of my informants denied any first hand knowledge of the sorcerer's methods and none of them believed that they themselves had been the victims of sorcery.

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Apparently the power to work evil to an enemy is dependent on 754
the possession of a charm. Nearly all *ombiasy* know formulae for making such charms and will sell them to clients with directions for their use. The transaction is kept secret, but even if it is discovered the *ombiasy* is rarely punished. It is considered part of his legitimate business. Directions for the manufacture and use of one killing charm have been given (see Manufacture and Use of Charms), but there are many others. Apparently human bones or earth from tombs is the most important ingredient in most of these.

There are a number of methods for directing the evil power against an enemy. The commonest seems to be to bury the charm beside or in a person's house or in his rice patch. It may also be placed in the spring or river from which he draws water, where it will injure the person who has been named to it, but no one else. The power of certain charms may be directed by pointing the finger at the enemy, looking at him fixedly, mentioning his name when he is present, or touching his person or food with the finger. One of the favorite methods with children is to touch the head and a stranger or enemy who does this is almost sure to be suspected if anything happens to the child. Some charms are mixed with the victim's food, or put inside a banana given him to eat. There can be little doubt that such "charms" are often genuine poisons. It seems probable that injury may also be caused by bringing into contact with the charm some object which has been in close contact with the victim, such as a lock of his hair, one of his garments, etc., but I could not verify this. At least it is a common belief among all the neighboring tribes.

When a person believes himself to be the victim of sorcery he appeals to an *ombiasy*, who verifies it by the *sikidy* and, as a first step, tries to find and destroy the charm which is the source of the trouble. One informant gave an amusing and spirited story of such a search. The *ombiasy* located the charm under the floor of the victim's house and began to dig for it but it evaded him, moving rapidly about under ground, like a mole. Finally he drove it into a corner, dug it up and carried it off. The *ombiasy* also gives the victim a charm to wear, to counteract that of the enemy. One of the favorite remedies is scrapings from the *araharaka*, a pole on which raffia is hung to dry.

Most Tanala sorcery is sporadic, based on the momentary need of some individual who may never have practiced it before and may never practice it again. There are, however, a few individuals

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754 who are professional sorcerers, working evil repeatedly for the pleasure they derive from it. Such persons are called *mpamosavy* and are universally feared and hated, although the practice of occasional [177] sorcery is condoned. Apparently *mpamosavy* have become much more numerous since the Imerina conquered the Tanala and many informants denied that they existed prior to the conquest. There may be some truth in this, for stories told of their antics are very much like those told by the Imerina about their own sorcerers.

The *mpamosavy*, who may be either men or women, are not content to injure their enemies by charms. They steal out of their houses at night, nude except for a white *lamba* which is wrapped around the head like a turban. They go to tombs, especially shortly after a burial, and dance there, rejoicing. This strengthens the influences which have caused the death and brings about the deaths of others. They rob tombs, carrying off valuables deposited with the dead and taking bones and parts of bodies, which are used to concoct evil charms. During my stay an *mpamosavy* stole a skull from a tomb and placed it in the middle of the village square, where it was found next day. The natives were less terrified than one might have expected and one of the men whose duty it was to shift old bodies at a burial gathered it up without ceremony, wrapped it in a *lamba* and took it back. There were no ceremonies for purification or to avert evil and within a week the incident seemed to have been forgotten.

When anyone in the village is ill, the *mpamosavy* will come and cry outside the house at night, mourning as if he were already dead. This strengthens the evil influences and makes the person die. They also scratch at doors and windows, terrifying persons in the house and acting as though they wished to break in, although they never enter. Sometimes they ride cattle until the cattle are exhausted, break down fences and do other wanton damage. Although they are greatly feared, they have no power to injure a person who confronts them boldly and several informants expressed a wish to encounter one. The reason for this was that, as the punishment for [683] the crime was death, if one captured an *mpamosavy* one could demand a huge sum for releasing him and concealing his identity.

754 928 Tanala *mpamosavy* apparently are solitary, not operating in organized groups like those of the Imerina. Several informants expressed the belief that a person might be an *mpamosavy* without knowing it himself, citing instances. Such a person would be forced to become one by the power of some evil charm. There seemed to

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be no idea of spirit possession. The unconscious *mpamosavy* would go to bed like anyone else, then rise and do his evil deeds and night running in a somnambulistic condition. One man did not know that he was an *mpamosavy* until his wife told him that he rose every night after they had gone to bed, went out, and returned some hours later with his body icy cold and his feet covered with dew. A similar case among the Betsileo seemed well authenticated. The child of a wealthy Christian family had died and been buried in the cemetery. It was found that some one came at night and trampled on the grave, tore up flowers that had been placed on it, etc. A watch was set and it was found that the offender was a female servant of the family. She had been the child's nurse and her devotion to it was unquestionable. She was overwhelmed with grief when she found what she had done, and all those who knew her were convinced that her acts had been unconscious. With such instances in mind it is not hard to understand why persons accused of being *mpamosavy* often doubt their own innocence, or why even the victims of trial by ordeal believe in its efficacy.

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FADY

The term *fady* is equivalent to the Polynesian taboo. It means a prohibition of any sort and, by an extension of the idea, the act or thing prohibited. The term is applied equally to acts which are simple breaches of good manners, punished only by popular disapprobation, and to those which are offensive to the ancestors and bring supernatural punishment. There are hundreds of *fady* and no one person is familiar with the entire series. In general, a few of the most important are known and obeyed, while the rest are known only to the *ombiasy* and afford them an unfailing supply of reasons for illness and misfortune.

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Tanala *fady* may be roughly classified as general *fady*, observed by the entire tribe, *fady* of the gens and village, and individual *fady*. The latter are nearly always associated with charms and have been described under that heading. Many of the general fady are associated with ideas of sympathetic magic. Thus it is *fady* to bring a flaming brand into the house, as this will bring in danger. It is also *fady* to carry a burden across the village square if it is slung on a pole between two men. This is because corpses are carried in this way and if one does it there will soon be a death. There are no doubt other *fady* of similar import. There are also a number of general *fady* on foods. Dogs, rats, snakes and crocodiles are never